

# Gender and Sex in the Structure of Feminist Theories: A Concept and a Development

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## Abstract

*Ann Oakley is considered the first to use the concept of 'gender'. She tried to distinguish between 'gender' and 'sex'. In fact, she borrowed the idea of distinguishing between the two concepts from the American psychologist Robert Stoller, who was working on unlimited or sexually ambiguous cases. Sex, at that time, was not clearly defined whether it refers to 'males' or 'females', especially since the feelings and emotions were not in harmony with the person's real sex. Robert found that the distinction between the two concepts was beneficial to describe the condition of those individuals who found themselves in special gender positions and models but practiced gender deeds that are not connected to their sex. Accordingly, Oakley defined 'sex' as: "the physiological and biological characteristics that distinguish 'males' from 'females.'" Oakley defined gender as "Masculinity and Femininity that are socially structured, and culturally and psychologically formed." These concepts are acquired through a socialization process, through which the individual learns how to become a 'male' and how to become a 'female' in a specific society and at a specific time, as 'gender' represents social characteristics and not a direct product that is connected to biological sex. In general, the concept of 'gender' refers to the distinction between the 'male' and the 'female' on the regular basis of the social role of each category, under the influence of the prevailing social values. The concept of 'Sex' or biological kind means, "the biological, physiological, and psychological differences between the two sexes regarding the differences of chromosomes and hormones and internal and external sexual organs, and consequently, 'Sex' is characterized by 'predestination' and 'aesthetics'. The differences between the woman and the man are fixed and eternal. This condition is called 'sexual dimorphism', namely, 'duplication' or 'duality', which indicates the existence of two kinds of the same category, which differ from each other in several properties. To express the biological differences between the two sexes, sociologists employ the term 'Sex-Category' or 'Sex-Assignment', which describe the operations through which social meanings are given to the biological category (male, female). Thus, we find that the concept of 'gender' has a dynamic meaning, where the role that men and women play extremely vary from one culture to another, and from one social group to another within the same culture. Ethnic race, social class, economic circumstances, and age are factors that influence the actions that are considered appropriate for women. Roughly, we can say that 'sex' is the concept that we give to our mother tongue, through which we speak and figure out our desires, while*

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'gender' indicates the cultural practices or media that enable these desires to be achieved [1].

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## INTRODUCTION: GENDER AS A LINGUISTIC CONCEPT

Gender is one of the most complicated and confusing concepts because its use is constantly changing and is always in progress. We speak about 'gender roles' and feel anxious about the gap between the two genders. We wonder whether our thoughts are not gender-biased or gender-specific. In order to understand the differences, we should look for additional information about these subjects and other related subjects that are related to gender studies, which are increasingly expanding these days. For example, the gender role suggests something that limits or restricts a role that we should play. The brief examples show that the concept of 'gender' is highly controversial and confusing but we cannot do without it, as if it were more a spot of instability than a spot of agreement. The origin of concept of 'gender' is originally a linguistic term, and from this, we can trace the sources of terms such as 'virility' and 'femininity' in the gender discourse. Gender is a concept that refers to the relations and differences between the man and the woman, which are attributed to differences between societies and cultures, which are constantly changing.[2]

The difference between 'sex' and 'gender' is difficult in Arabic since the whole issue is modern in Arab culture. To find out the classical meaning of 'sex', we can only refer to authoritative dictionaries that mention these concepts. 'Sex' in Ibn Manzour's *Lisan al-Arab* encyclopedic dictionary has more than one meaning but we will focus on the ones that contribute to the study. The first Arabic equivalent of the concept of 'gender' in English is "jins/جنس", which means: a 'kind', a type, or a 'category' of something".[3]

This meaning is far from the meaning that is connected to the biological instinct that *Lisan al-Arab* refers to under another entry: (nakaha/ marry/تزوج). If a certain man (nakaha/ marries) a woman, it means that he married her. Besides, it implies that he had sexual intercourse with her. The original meaning of 'nikah' is 'having sexual intercourse and it developed into "marriage" because 'marriage' is the cause of permitted sexual intercourse.[4] This definition of 'jins/ sex' and 'nikah/ marriage' in Arabic indicates that there is another classification of 'gender', which this study focuses on: 'femininity' and 'masculinity'.

Another reliable Arabic-Arabic dictionary, called *al-Muhit*, refers to 'femininity' (untha/أنثى) by saying that the root of the noun "untha/ femininity" is the verb "a.n.th", which means that the woman gave birth to a 'female' (untha/أنثى).[5]

Regarding 'male' versus 'female', *Lisan al-Arab* says that "dhakar/ male/ذكر" is the opposite of "untha/ female" and "mutadhakira/مُتَذَكِّرَة" is a "tomboy female", namely, a female who looks like a 'male'. [6] Besides, the concept of 'masculinity' ذُكُورَة ' refers to "man/ rajul/رَجُل". Ibn Manzur adds that the term 'man/rajul' refers to someone who is older than a youth.[7]

In my opinion, what is remarkable in these definitions is that they stress the meaning of 'unuhta/ femininity' equalizes 'softness' and 'elasticity'. The meaning of 'masculinity' equalizes 'power', 'hardness', 'roughness', and ultimately 'virility'.

No doubt, these meanings have a great effect on the semantic level of these concepts due to the fact that they are a product of social culture. The question that arises here is this: Is the difference between these social roles judged by their biological difference or is it a social product of something cultural, social, and ideological?

The concept of 'gender' in general was used to define the differences between men and women. Words such as, 'duality of gender' or 'gender blending' doubts these differences, drawing our attention to the artificiality of what we think of as a 'natural' behavior. This meaning of 'disagreement' should quickly warn us of taking over one brief definition in search of a system and clarity. According to the sixth edition of Samuel Johnson's dictionary, the word 'gender' can refer to a linguistic practice to classify the names as 'masculine' or 'feminine' or 'neuter'. The word 'gender' can also mean 'sex'. Similarly, the verb 'gender' means 'produce', 'give birth', and 'make love' as in Shakespeare's play Othello: " A Cistern for foul toads to gender in." [8]

## THE STUDY: DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF GENDER

### The Social Gender

The word 'gender' is an English word that is descended from Latin, and linguistically, it means 'genus', namely, 'sex' (from the 'masculinity' and 'femininity' points of view). Due to the modernity of the subject of 'gender', the majority of people mix between it and the concept of 'sex' (in the biological meaning), despite the existence of the large difference between the two concepts, by which the theories explain the manner in which the concepts of the social genders were built. There was a discrepancy between opinions on whether the two concepts are

interconnected and whether one of them is built on the other.

The word 'gender' had been used before Ann Oakley and other writers in the 1980s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but it was used to describe the characteristics of men and women that are defined socially versus those characteristics that are defined biologically. Ann Oakley argued that peoples and cultures largely differ in their definitions of 'masculinity' and 'femininity', and consequently, the separation between the concepts of 'sex' and 'gender' differs from one culture to another.[9]

The concept of 'gender' reappeared in the international arena with the Declaration of the Woman's Year in (1975). The concept was well-established during the International Decade for Women Decade (1976-1985). Interest in many developing countries emerged demanding the treatment of many qualitative gaps that exist between women and men in many legislative, health, educational, professional, and political fields that aimed to achieve what is called 'Gender Equity'.[10]

The concept of 'gender' is not an alternative to the concept of 'sex', which refers to the biological differences between men and women. In other words, it is possible to employ the concept of 'sex' in statistical censuses, but 'gender' can be employed in the analysis of roles, responsibilities, and special needs for men and women in every place and every context. Therefore, introducing the concept of 'gender' as an alternative to the concept of 'sex' aims to emphasize that what men and women do, and everything that is expected of them to do, except their sexual functions that are sexually different, can change in the course of time according to the varied social and cultural factors. Therefore, the concept of 'gender' focuses on social roles, which are part of the structural-functional theory. While this theory excludes the concepts of 'power' and 'conflict' in its interpretation of phenomena, the social category attributes the issue of the woman to instability in the balance of power and influence between the two sexes and calls for redistribution of 'power' between them through revision of the distribution of roles and opportunities. Since 'gender' is an independent system of individuals, and since 'sex' defines the characteristics, behavior, and identities of individuals, everything that is connected to the concept of 'gender' changes according to the change in the social attitude and the change in gender expectations that are related to it.

The social frames that surround the operation of social interaction impose the characteristics and expected behavior of the interactive individuals. This imposes the existence of what is called 'social categorization' that

returns to the operations through which the individuals classify themselves and the others, too.[11]

The modern meanings of the concept of 'gender' still carry the earliest historical traces as 'gender' still plays its role as a grammatical term. Besides its being a modified expression of the person's sex, it is no more used as a synonym for the sexual verb. Despite that, these concepts that we inherited from the 18<sup>th</sup> century seem limited in a remarkable way in comparison with the complex linguistic flow. Besides, they are separated from the expansion of the meaning that distinguishes the current period. A large part of the reason for this feeling of semantic disconnection stems from the truth that genderism, which started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, gradually took a new position as a subject of scientific and popular knowledge.

Nobody knows exactly when and where the concept of 'gender' started to refer to the social and cultural aspects of sexual difference. However, it is clear that the concept had been common in the science of 'sex' at the beginning of the 1960s. For example, the term 'gender' did not appear in Alex Comfort's review of the book *Sexual Behavior in Society*, till the book was edited for publishing, thirteen years after that, under the title of *Sex in Society*, when the author added a brief discussion of the 'gender roles', and this discussion was added in a chapter about 'Biological Background' of the human genderism, in which Alex emphasized the difficulty in knowing to what extent our sexual behavior was instinctive, due to the importance of the higher mental professions of the human being. This explains the reason that "the gender role that the individual adopts, whether a 'man' or a 'woman', according to cultural criteria, is learned thoroughly and sufficiently in a strange way. The concept of 'genderism' is used here to indicate a broad variety of types of behavior among societies. However, it also suggests that the degree of choice in it is always limited. Alex Comfort hoped to remove ambiguity regarding human genderism, and in this way, help it in liberating itself from what is commonly believed that sexual taboos are unnecessary and irrational."<sup>[12]</sup>

With the huge revival of the feministic policy in North America and Western Europe at the end of the sixties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were renewed attempts to understand and discuss the bad social circumstances that women had undergone. Stoller's chapter about *Sex and Genderism* was introduced in the service of the subject, because of its cutting-edge in criticizing male dominance. Therefore, when Kate Millett started drawing the general lines of her theory regarding patriarchy in her book, *Sexual Policy* (1977), which was one of the founding texts for the establishment of feminism of the second wave, depended on Stoller's work to prove her argument that says that

"male and female are actually two cultures..." That is so because Stoller's proofs seemed to raise doubts regarding the legitimacy and continuity of the psychological identity to prove. In spite of that, Ken Millett was actually moving in the opposite direction to Stoller's analysis because when she redesigned its analysis, she said: "Sex is biological and genderism is psychological, and consequently, it is cultural"<sup>[13]</sup>

Probably the most comprehensive attempt to theorize the difference between 'sex' and 'gender' in this period is in Robert Stoller's writings that appeared in his book *Sex and Gender: on the Development of Masculinity and Femininity* (1968). Stoller defined the starting point for his work in a paper by Freud about the psychological constitution of a homosexual condition of a woman, who argued that the sexual physical characteristics of a person, his mental attitudes, and object of desire can change in an independent way of each other in such a way that "a man who has dominant sexual traits can stay a male all his erotic life, but he can be transformed and can love males instead of females. In a similar tone, Stoller used the concept of 'gender' to refer to the complexities of "those huge areas of behavior and feelings, and thoughts that are related to the two sexes, and despite that, they do not possess the biological indications." Despite that, I do not tend only to mix sex with gender, but I suppose easily that the components of gender are mutually supported, while in reality, they pull in different directions. In addition to the separation of 'sex' from 'gender' analytically, Stoller distinguished between "the gender-role and the gender-identity in order to point out that man's internal life and external life might be contradictory or fail to meet. The gender role that the man pretends to be in front of others might introduce weak evidence to the person who pretends that he is.

Consequently, the accurate definition of the gender-identity, according to Stoller's theory, is based on the possibility of internal dissent or nonidentification with a man's sexual entity. "The sexual identity starts with knowledge and realization whether consciously and unconsciously when the human being feels that he is not as a male-only but a female, or feminized or even as a man who imagines that he is a woman." According to Stoller, the few years of childhood generally lead to a solid nucleus of gender identity, and this might sometimes clash with experiences or values, or later desires.<sup>[14]</sup>

There are three main opinions that explain the gender differences between the two sexes and clarify the manner of the development of the gender identity and acquisition of gender roles, too, depending on the differences between the concepts of the biological/sexual category and the

social/gender category. These opinions are represented in three main directions, each of which includes a group of theories:

### 1) Gender and Biology: The Natural Differences

The approach of natural differences tries to reveal to what extent the biological differences between men and women are the cause behind the existence of gender differences. Some thinkers consider the natural biological fields, which range between hormones and chromosomes to the size of the brain and genes, responsible for the existence of behavioral differences between men and women. Consequently, these differences lead to inequality between the two sexes. The quality is dominant nearly in all societies despite the absence of scientific evidence that supports these opinions especially since it ignores the role of social interaction in the constitution of human behavior.

### 2) Gender Socialization

Social gender upbringing emphasizes that learning gender roles is achieved through institutes of social upbringing such as the family and media. This approach distinguishes between the *natural sex* and *social gender*. The male and female children from this point of view are born with natural sex and develop their social gender through their interaction with the different institutes that are connected to the operation of the primary and secondary social upbringing. They also insert the social traditions and customs and the expectations that are in harmony with the sex of each one. It is known that gender differences are not decided by natural biology but are cultural products, and consequently, inequality takes place between the two sexes.

### Social Structure of the Concepts: Gender and Sex

The social structure of the concept of gender and the concept of sex maintains that the two concepts are gained culturally and then are structured socially, and the social structure of the concept of 'gender' is not limited to the concept of 'gender', but for the two categories. We can also change our organs and bodies and give them the meaning that we want, even if that is a challenge to the customary situation. This is done through a program of slimming, cosmetic operations, or even trans-gendering. Modern technology and science development left nothing to be considered 'impossible'. That point of view emphasizes that 'sex and gender' are not everlasting concepts; they are two subjects that are connected to the choice of the individual within the different social frames.<sup>[15]</sup>

Employment of the concept of 'sex' versus the concept of 'gender' leads to other parallels: nature versus culture, the sociological versus the social, and the material versus the cultural. Adoption of the gender role is not an event that



takes place one time only and is not determined by biology. Actually, the adoption of the gender role is a constant process of acquiring skills and characteristics that are distinguished by gender. This process starts when the embryo moves inside the womb of the mother. If he/she is active and rolls over, he/ she will be a male baby according to people's common belief. Then the process of typology starts before the baby comes into the world. The parents have in advance rules regarding behavioral types and characteristics of the two sexes.[16]

In my opinion, we find that the concept of 'category' draws attention to aspects that have the social foundation for the differences between men and women. Since that time, the use of this concept expanded to refer, not only to the individual identity and the personality, but to the symbolical level as well, and the stereotypical cultural images of manliness and femininity. It refers, too, to the structural level and division of the work on basis of 'category' at the official institutes and organizations. In spite of its increasing use recently, it has remained an ambiguous concept (in Arabic) as it has been translated into several terms including, biological sex, social gender, social role, and social category.

Ambiguity regarding the translation of this concept into Arabic is still valid. The concept of 'category' or 'gender' is equivalent to the concept of 'sex'. The difference between the two concepts lies in the fact that the concept of 'sex' is connected to the specific biological characteristics that distinguish the man from the woman, and which cannot be changed even if cultures, times, and places changed. On the other hand, the concept of 'gender' suggests that the man exploits the woman, which has become one of the most prominent types of conflict. Currently, the concept of the social category (gender) is used to express the process of studying the interconnected relationship between the woman and the man in society. In other words, the gender category explains the relationship that grows between the man and the woman on social-political, cultural, and religious grounds, namely, the differences that people have created throughout their long history. The human being is born with sex biologically, and it is unchangeable. Gender/the social category, however, is changeable because it is social. Therefore, those who support the employment of the concept introduce it as a concept that bears the ideas of the woman's liberation and improvement of her role in cultural growth.

The conclusion is that social gender is a process of studying the interconnected relationship between men and women in society, and this relationship is called Gender Relationship, which is a relationship that is ruled by different factors – economic, social, cultural, political, and,

religious, which have an effect on the value of work in the reproductive and organizational roles that are done by men and women alike. This relationship often leads to balance at the expense of the woman in the distribution of power. The result is that the man occupies a superior position in society while the woman occupies a secondary position, and consequently, the position of the woman and the man in society should create a convenient atmosphere for active development in society. It is possible for the relationship of the second category to be balanced if we change the concept of 'power' by the concept of 'empowerment', namely, the power to achieve something. Empowerment aims to find circumstances that help the man and the woman alike to direct their daily and future needs.

Adnan al-Amin says that the concept of gender has historical roots that started with the feminist movements of women's liberation in the West, and then the feminist movement in their different periods and countries. The supporters of this concept defend it arguing that it is a means for raising and stopping discrimination against women in the world. The supporters see that the concept of gender refers to the stereotypical cultural image of masculinity and femininity. In other words, the dominating cultures are the ones that cause a change in the woman's idea about herself and her role and then her status in society. Consequently, the injustice that is done to her and her lower status, and her lack of access to her rights are caused by the stereotypical image that limits her, and what society and its culture put regarding everything about the man's role and the woman's role. They also see that the formation of this stereotypical image of gender is a kind of exaggerated and biased mental concept on the side of men against women so it will spread and be repeated in daily life. In the 1970s, sociologists' and psychologists' concern was focused on clarification of the existence of the 'category', which means 'clarification' that the differences and divisions between men and women cannot be explained through biological differences if the person is a man or a woman, but through the prevailing cultural thoughts regarding virility and femininity. They realized, as they say, that there are differences between cultures regarding the thoughts that are related to gender and differences that are related to men's roles and women's roles. New studies appeared about the way that male young children turn out to be adult men and women through the social upbringing operations throughout the periods of child education, his culture, and the professional practices and family ideology. This point of view through which the formulation of the frame of 'gender' was completed, which we specifically find in the cultural role rather than in the biological division, which cannot be ignored, calls for passing thoughts that desire to achieve

absolute equality between men and women, without taking into consideration the biological differences. People are social beings, and biology is a pretext only to decide their sexual identity specifically in patriarchal societies because the male role is the dominant sexual role while the female role is the persecuted sexual role. Femininity is a group of qualities and conditions but if the feminist body adopts them, it becomes female, and if not, it remains outside femininity. Therefore, feminization is considered a cultural concept and a mental perception rather than an essential natural value. This concept is from the cultural aspects and therefore, it is changeable and transient. Biological differences between the sexes have been exploited through the positive role of the woman, which has become the main reason for devoting her role to reproduction, childbearing, upbringing, and caring for her husband, who concealed her from participation in public life for a long period of time.

As a result of what has been said, interest in the concept of gender has become an urgent necessity because it gives special care to the ways in which the prevailing culture, at a special time and place, produced a definition for masculinity and femininity as two contradictory poles, keeping the male in the position of power and control. The concept of gender is qualified to face the traditional dominating male discourse and is also qualified to spread the legal culture and penetrate the intellectual cultural structures for men, not only among the female elites but among women in general.

The phenomenon of sexual typology is as old as humanity, and it seems from the exploration of human history that this phenomenon started with the division of roles at work between man and woman, and with the discovery of man to his capabilities and experimentation at work. At that point, the issue of 'feminist' discrimination between an unable man and an unable woman started. These statements have developed through time till they have become an essential human issue and turned in several stages into a detailed one.[17]

The concept of 'gender' admits that there are differences and a variety in the roles of the two sexes according to the prevailing situation in culture but gender does not require the abolition of this kind of variety, but it stipulates two conditions: the *first* is: the existence of equality between the value of the roles that the two sexes perform, and equality in the status of each role. In other words, there should be no standard that is based on leadership and subordination, or on valuation and undervaluation. The *second* stipulation is that: we should look at events from the points of view of males and females, not from the point of view of one side only. We should not expect that the

existence of women writers of texts necessarily means that we should see the events from the point of view of females only, because there are females who sometimes adopt the male point of view and the male attitude, and find males who adopt the female attitude. In short, the concept of 'gender' stipulates that we should adopt the analytical dimension and criterion of any subject from the points of view of the two sexes, and we should look at their different roles according to the difference in culture, time, and place from point of view of integration and supplementation rather than differentiation.[18]

People are born males and females, and through education, society makes them 'boys' and 'girls' and then 'men' and 'women'. At that time, they dictated the principles of behavior, their attitudes and roles are defined to them, the suitable activities are suited for their biological type, and they are taught how to communicate with others.

This acquired behavior by learning during the social process constitutes the gender-identity and defines the gender-roles. The Discrepancy between men's roles and women's roles according to discrepancies between cultures makes gender a dynamic concept as a result of the dynamics of culture. The human being is not born as a ready-made character neither in a female nature nor in a male one. People develop their individual evolution through a give-and-take process with the social gender and class environment through the acquisition of the distinguished conditions where people face these conditions in the form of social experiences that are represented in various objects and events. Things and events develop under the influence of different economic and ideological conditions according to the social relationships in their concrete historical form that is connected to their class and gender function.

The gender concept tries to fill the gap between the general and the specific, where the general is connected to the man and the specific is connected to the woman. It is customary for people to belittle the value of the general woman's work because of her role in childbearing and feeding the family, but sometimes the opposite happens, when the family is ignored because of the general work. This explains the importance of the concept and the cause of the local and international interest in it in order to create a kind of balance between the specific role that starts from the woman's role in the family, and the general role that starts from her role in a general job or in society.[19] The concept of gender is culturally based and is expressed socially through our concepts and perceptions that have been built around this concept. Thus, it reflects the nature of society through communication between male and

female individuals and the beliefs and attitudes that they bear.[20]

The conclusion is that the concept of gender develops through society's values and beliefs, and through its way in the organization of social life as it is built up socially but it differs from one culture to another, from a period to another, and it also differs in its relationship with the other sex. Culture builds this concept and preserves its meaning through its dependence on the biological differences between the two sexes. As a result, the meaning of masculinity and femininity is defined in society. Masculinity in all societies relatively means that the man is strong, ambitious, successful, rational, and able to control his emotions. Though the requirements of masculinity have decreased the pressure on its existence in the early ages, it is still practicing pressure on men to submit to it and be characterized by it. This created the concept of real men. A 'real man' is someone who belongs to masculinity at any age, at any time, and in any culture. He should not 'cry', or ask for the help of others, as the concept of the 'real man' emphasizes that he should be successful and strong in any position that he occupies and in any role that he plays. The concept of femininity is even more developed today than in previous periods. However, there are still some traits that compel the woman to have because they are suitable to her sex as a real woman, too. For example, she has to be beautiful, attractive, tender, good-looking, pretty, mild, soft, non-violent, emotional, and has the ability to give nurturance to others and social relationships, and should love children and her home. Culture includes the concepts of masculinity and femininity and defines their contents. Therefore, gender is a concept that is produced out of social interaction between individuals, and the results of this interaction. In short, it is a collection of all interconnected relationships.[21]

Gender depends on the abolition of any kind of discrimination between man and woman under any pretext that excludes the woman from, authority, dominance, and identity. Till the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the human body was described as a body of the same flesh. In other words, it was thought to be made of the same kind, but it should be of more space, namely, 'an open body in which the issue of sexual differences constitutes an issue of degree more than an issue of 'category'. Ambrose Pare says that sex is not anything but the distinction of the male from the female, where this distinction is more noticeable because it is related to parts of the body and the place of these parts. There is little difference between them, but the female is cooler than the male. Consequently, it was believed that it is possible for a woman to change her "sex" spontaneously because women possess lots of things and they like the parts that lie in their wombs. Similarly, men

also have organs that hang from them, and so on, and this change can be certainly embodied. Arnold Davidson showed how the word "Sexuality" in the 19<sup>th</sup> century kept away from its connection to the appearance of pure biological Sex. Instead, it started to refer to the sexual feelings of a certain person, which reflects the fact that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, specifically in 1890, sexual identity was no more exclusively connected to the anatomical structure of the internal and external reproductive organs. Now, it is a matter of whims and fantasies, tastes, preparations, satisfaction, and psychological features. These crystallized meanings regarding the concept of 'gender' constitute a strong signal that the 'sexual life' started to be seen as more than just a collection of feelings. Kraft Aping describes what he calls "Fragments of Sexual Instinct" saying, these fragments are primary confusions, which are very important due to the fact that the individual mentality depends largely on the nature of sexual sensitivity. It affects in a special way ethical, aesthetic, and social feelings and actions. Of course, this cultural transformation did not take place overnight and forever, as sexual biology and sexual psychology have continued to be integrated.[22] In order to understand the concept of gender, we have to take into consideration three important points:

- Gender is a social and cultural process, which means that its production and reproduction is a constant process. Gender exists in a different way according to cultures and time, where it is practiced in the form of 'roles' and 'behavior' and it is not expressed in words only.

2) Gender is a system of interconnected practices that are independent of individuals. The concept of 'gender' is not a group of characteristics and types of behavior that appear at all social levels and are represented by individuals at birth according to their sex. In other words, it is a multi-level phenomenon, which enables us to discover how social operations are carried out by social workers, social institutes, and types of work that embody and produce the concept of gender.

3) Importance of the definition of the concept of gender is attributed to its importance in organizing relations of inequality between the two sexes in case the biological differences lead to gender inequality, as it is a very important dimension according to which power and privileges are distributed in society.[23]

The last two hundred years or more witnessed what Michel Foucault described once as a "discursive explosion" of the issue of sexuality. He did not mean by that that people started talking about it more openly or that the first traditions or taboos have gone away. The French

researcher Antoinette Fouque spoke about the concept of 'gender' in its social meaning and said that it means that the man's and the woman's characteristics are connected to their social relations under economic, cultural, and ideological factors that define his and her roles. She adds that it is necessary to apply equality between the man and the woman in all public governmental and nongovernmental policies. Therefore, and in view of the definitions that have been given, we can say that children, from the first day of their birth, are pushed systematically to play a gender role and are metamorphosed into a creature called 'male' or 'female'. This process downsizes the two sexes, but the female is more limited than the male in her potential capabilities, her independence is belittled, and she is more persecuted in real life. So, gender is attributed to characteristics that are connected to men and women, which are constituted socially versus the characteristics that are established on a biological basis. Though gender is based on biological sex, it is formed more socially than biologically.<sup>[24]</sup>

Probably the most effective attempt to define the relationship between 'sex' and 'gender' took place through the prominent contrast in Gayle Rubin's essay "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy of Sex' (1975). In a theoretical cultural analysis, Rubin argues that every known society possesses an "a system of a sex/gender system," which she defines as "the set of arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity, and in which these transformed sexual needs are satisfied," irrespective of the queerness of some concepts. Rubin's essay remains one of the most attempts that draws attention to look through the causes of gender discrepancies and builds up a systematic theoretical frame that connects one's job with relationships and politics, depending on insights from the Marxist economics and psychoanalytic interpretations of identity and anthropological studies of marriage and family. Rubin shows how men in a systematic way "possess specific rights on their female relatives" while "women do not possess the same rights, whether on themselves or on their male relatives." Women can be used as 'brides', 'spoils of victory', 'gifts', and even 'commodities' that can be traded or purchased or sold." "Sex is sex, but what is considered as 'gender' can be decided and achieved culturally."

In spite of that, the idea of systems of oppressive relationships represents the "imposition of social purposes on a part of the natural world", including the translation of 'sex' into 'gender'. Sex and gender, therefore, are closely linked, but not because one of them is 'natural', while the other represents its transformation into 'culture'. Actually, both of them are inevitably cultural statements that refer to

ways of description and understanding of the human bodies and human relationships, and our relations with ourselves and others. Sex and gender overlap, and necessarily, sometimes, in a disturbed manner. Rubin says: "Men and women are different in nature, but they are not as different as day and night, heaven and earth, death and life. In fact, from the point of view of nature, men and women are the closest to each other. The idea that men and women are more different from each other than from anyone else, should be coming from a place that is not natural.[25]

In her book *Gender Trouble* (1990), Judith Butler says that 'gender' is a symbolical kind of 'open work' that allows, through its repetition, recognition of us as desiring and desired selves. For Butler, "gender is an identity that can be formed ambiguously in the course of time, which is inaugurated in an external space through stylizing of 'actions'. Gender influence takes place through stylizing the body, and consequently, it should be understood as the secular way that constitutes gestures, movements, and body styles of different kinds. Butler's argument that gender is primarily a verb of pampering (coding) or representation that might appear as if gender were a matter of choice, and an issue of adoption or discarding identities when we desire. Butler warned herself of this popular reading of the gender issue. For her, the defect in this image lies in our failure to take into consideration the contrast that we feel about 'gender', not as an identity that we embrace freely, but as an identity that we also struggle against it when we use language in our daily life that is derived from it partially. Gender supports our ability to make decisions and affect them while it gets out of our control steadily, and makes us fall into the complicated nets of meanings that cannot be understood fully by one person. Butler says: "We should not imagine 'gender' as a fixed identity," and instead, we should see it as a result. It is the 'secular' product of body gestures, movements, and styles of different kinds and are repeated regularly, and create the impression of the existence of a constant gender self.<sup>[26]</sup>

We conclude and say that Butler calls this impression an 'illusion' because she wants to emphasize the way in which 'gender' is achieved in a routine way through those performances that gender permits. These are performances that are open to disruptions and unexpected change. Gender as such is liable to appear hollow and lacks psychological depth rather than a concrete one. Butler's intention is that gender is ultimately solid as much as the social and cultural practices that constitute it are over time.



In her literary works, Monique Wittig combines the roles of radical feminist theorists and novelists. Her works were mainly concerned with the problems of 'gender' and 'language'. Wittig calls for a revolution in language as the first condition for social change. "Can we emancipate the slave? Can we emancipate the black male, the black female? How can the woman be different? Will we continue writing 'white' for the 'white man' The change in economic relations is not enough? We should make a political transformation of the fundamental concepts, namely, the strategic concepts for us because there is a different system for materialism and language. Language is affected from within via these strategic concepts. Such words refer to the overwhelming effect of language on the social body that it impresses and formulates strongly. Wittig's main goal is what she calls 'the Straight Mind', which is a type of thinking in the world "that cannot think about a culture and a society where heterosexuality does not organize all the human relationships, but it produces its concepts and all the processes that go beyond awareness, too."

In view of this opinion, gender relations cannot be equalized forever, because my statements of a man' and 'a woman' are defined as non-parallel or hierarchical from the beginning. Language plays a critical role in perpetuating this confusion because by teaching the woman to call herself a woman, she submits, too, implicitly, to the privileges that men enjoy. The other sexual imagination denies the women the ability to behave as a 'subject'. This cannot be achieved except by controlling the ways in which language is used. In order to become what Wittig calls "a complete subject", the person, first, has to boycott the hypotheses that are stuffed into the gender grammar of the other. This system of linguistic attitudes is the one that attributes 'identity' to women in comparison with men. 'Gender' has often been used as a sociological statement in the first place, as if the language were of secondary importance only. Therefore, when Wittig reflects on this hypothesis, she looks through the language at the place in which 'gender' starts, namely, the personal pronouns or subjective pronouns (I, You, He, She, It, We, They). Words decide our place within the discourse as males and females, and they also work in the same way as the declaration about 'sex' works in the civil status, by calling for specific gender identities.<sup>[27]</sup>

Shulamith Firestone maintains that the patriarchal system that subjugates the woman derives its roots from biological inequality between the two sexes. Unlike Marxism and Marxists who see that the real class discrimination is not done by the bourgeoisie and the Proletariat, but exists between men and women. It is the relations of childbearing and not the relations of production that constitute the main

mover of history, and women's persecution is attributed to biological differences, and therefore, woman's liberation is a biological revolution versus the economic revolution that Marxism introduced.[28]

The conclusion is that 'gender' in Western thought tried to neutralize the man and keep him away. The strange thing is that this was motivated by male thoughts and premises in which the man's control of the woman has increased, and the fields of his enjoyment with her have broadened, as we see in the calls for women's liberation and calls for more femininity. These thoughts claim that they will turn upside down the structure of contrast between the 'male' and 'female' so that the female will become the 'origin' and the male will become the 'branch'. These calls, which are dependent on conflicting materialistic thought, will not be able to do anything in this field, except they will use the instrumentality of suppression that they claimed they came to struggle against.

#### LANGUAGE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF GENDER IN ARABIC STUDIES

The subject of gender is a novel one in Arabic studies. The writer Zelikha Abu Risha tried in her book *al-Lugha al-Gha'iba/ The Absent Language* to introduce an analysis of gender language. The writer admits that there are lots of difficulties that she encountered in dealing with the gender language, purifying it, and transforming it into an ordinary and balanced language. The source of those difficulties lies in our linguistic heritage that originally tended to adopt a masculine attitude: "the non-human in the language is pluralized in the morphological form of 'Sound Feminine Plural'. The implication is that there is a parallel or equality between the human feminine and the non-human creatures or objects, such as (al-hijar aqasiya = stones are hard. 'qasiya' is a feminine adjective). Similarly, (the girls are qasiyat = the girls are cruel. 'qasiyat' is a feminine plural adjective). The question that arises here is: How can language be saved from 'masculinization'? The writer Zelikha introduces an answer quoted from dictionaries. The entry (male/dhakar ذَكَر) indicates severity and perfection, but the entry (female/أنثى/untha (means, (موت/death). (أنيث/ anith) means (tender and easy). Ibn al-Arabi claimed that the 'woman/ المرأة' was given this name which is derived from the name of (البلد الأنيث/ the tender/ kind town) because the (imra'ah/woman) is more tender than the man and she was called (a female/ untha) because of her tenderness. The Arabic language clearly distinguishes between 'masculine' and 'feminine' things or creatures. However, this distinction goes beyond the linguistic event to the discourse that forms or is formed through language, too. Masculinization is the origin.[29]

The classical Arab grammarian, Ibn Jinni[30], mentions in his book, *al-Khasa'is*, that masculinization of the feminine is a very wide subject and it is attributed in its origin to the 'masculine'. He adds that "masculinization will not be the origin unless the feminine becomes a 'branch'. [31]"

Abd al-Hamid ibn Yahya al-Katib (132 h./750 AD), a well-known writer in the 8<sup>th</sup> century, was the secretary of the last Umayyad Caliph, Marwan II, and a supreme stylist of early Arabic prose. He said that "The best speech is the one whose pronunciation is *virile*, and its meaning is *virgin*." [32]

In his book, *Women and Language*, Abdullah al-Ghadami analyzed this saying as an unequal cultural division, where the man takes the most important and serious component of the Arabic language, which is: the 'lexis' which is considered the practical embodiment and the basis of writing and rhetoric, while the woman takes the 'meaning' that is directed by the 'speech'. The meaning loses its existence or value outside the frame of 'speech' or writing. This division led to man's monopoly of 'writing' and 'speech' over the woman, which led to the man's control of the linguistic and cultural thought, and consequently, of history, because the man was the writer. Here, the woman approaches the language after the man has controlled all the linguistic possibilities, and has decided what is real, and what is figurative in the expressive discourse, and the woman had nothing except a symbolic metaphor or mental imagination that the man writes and weaves according to his rhetoric and life reasons. [33]

This situation turned him into a history-and-language maker, and consequently, a culture maker. The woman, however, remained in all cultures of the world just the 'meaning' of the language, and consequently, a follower to the man rather than an active language maker. Since 'meaning' always needs the 'lexis', there was a need for the existence of a structure and constant restructure in order to raise man's image and his importance, and decrease the woman's status along the ages and in all cultures of the world, even within the language itself. That was reflected in the woman's image in language, first, or in the non-use of a special language that expresses the woman's life and the choice of a male language to express the feelings of the two sexes, despite the richness of the Arabic language in the second person to address women, too. All that led along the ages to the marginalization of the woman and confiscation of her rights, and replacement of the man as a representative of the mind, while she remained a representative of the body. This situation has continued from the age of philosophers till our age including all those who talked about the woman and described her despite her absence from writing about culture and history. Some

scholars even considered 'masculinization' in language to be the 'origin' in language and feminization a 'branch' of that origin, exactly like the legend that says that Eve is a 'branch' from Adam, which is a constant admission of a constant misappropriation of the woman's rights. [34]

Thus, language started transferring to man a ready-made system of values that, in turn, lead to a cardinal separation between the two sexes, and the prevalence of masculine traits over feminine ones. Thus, the man in this way started to appear more able than the woman in attributes that are connected to the mind and physical power, as the language that we use to formulate our culture and identity defines our attitudes toward ourselves and the other. Women have been marginalized in history books because their job was limited to the house and family and they did not know how to write and read at that time. Consequently, they could not write about their experiences. The man was in the middle of the cultural map, and he was the linguist, the knowledge-producer in it, and its consumer as he knew how to read and write and interpret. The woman was on the margin of culture and outside the circle of action. The woman was the subject of language and material in the text, and one of the metaphors of the literary discourse. Because she did not know how to read and write, she had no place in explaining the culture and interpreting knowledge, and she had no field to appear in as a writer and a creator. [35]

However, if the woman wrote and her writing was brilliant, she had to contradict herself and talk to the man in his own language and his education and had to think in the same way as he thinks. The man's education and thoughts occupied culture and colonized it till it has become a 'man' and culture has become a 'male'. Thus, the woman's success started to be judged by her supremacy in comparison to the creative achievement of the man.

The woman in her established image is an integrative creature rather than an independent one. She is in the middle of others, within them, from them, and with them; she is the daughter of this and that, the wife of this and that, and the mother of this and that. [36]

In his book, *Women and Language*, Abdullah al-Ghadami points out that eloquence is connected to masculinization. In order to be eloquent, you have to say about the woman that she is the 'couple of this or that....', and it is not eloquent to feminize her and say "she is the wife of this or that...". If we find one male among a group of females, it is eloquent to address them using the masculine gender. Eloquence requires that you address them using the masculine version of the person who is among them because he is the only 'original' one and all of them are 'branches'.

The Egyptian scholar Nasser Abu Hamid sees that language is an ideology that practices a kind of racial discrimination between men and women because it makes out of the female Arab name equivalent to the foreign name from the point of view of classification value. In addition to the fact that the feminization "taa" (تاء/ ta'a) differentiates between masculine and feminine on the level of the 'morphological structure', the use of nunation (تنوين tanween/nunation) is not allowed on feminine proper nouns. Besides, it is not allowed to use 'nunation' on foreign proper nouns as well.[37]

Non-Arab thinkers also dealt with the issue of 'language and gender'. Bakhtin, who disagrees with de Saussure regarding the arbitrariness of the sign, emphasizes that ideology is present in the implications of words that produce meaning. Hayden White maintains that ideology is a process through which we produce different implications between men and women. This exchange changed across history and, undoubtedly, is likely to change again. This relationship, which can be realized between the implications of words, ideologies, and transformations, is an important relationship in the process of analyzing the structure of the woman's Self in the discourses that constitute the concept of the right to vote, for example, and thus, the image of the female appears inferior to the male's image. The language here is a social and political practice besides its being a creation and communication of the implications within material contexts via the process of arguments, variety, and disagreement, and not necessarily by marginalization and exclusion. This means that 'gender' allows for the creation of an idea through language, and, at the same time, 'gender' is created by the ideas and through them.

It is known that language is one form of the symbolical forms of "nazm" (النظم/ arrangement or words) that adopts the power on the one hand, and adopts the 'center', on the other. It is not only a tool of communication, but also, from the anthropological aspect, the main "nazim" (organizer) of the whole cultural product, the mental product, and the spiritual product of the nation. Besides being a symbolical authority, it is a tool for this authority, as most forms of authority practice are centered on the discourse that the language constitutes its form and meaning. The arena of real conflict in history is over the control of the tools of submission. He who has the right to speak will be able to control the authority, and therefore, the replacement of the language as a tool to subjugate the woman and melt her in the texture of the male discourse gave the opportunity to the male control of society. By that, the language has made this male superiority and exclusion of the woman and her inferiority a justified situation. The power of subjugation that the language

possesses makes the woman submit to and accept all the conditions and ways of domination, without declared coercion, and makes her move through this linguistic unconsciousness in such a way that makes the woman inevitably submit to and accept its conditions and ways. Therefore, if the female discourse, by the rule of this coercion, has to face the prevailing system through the use of the same language, it has to position itself, from the same point of departure, within the gaps of the male discourse, or within the gaps of the language that it occupies and controls, and works from there, namely, from within, to threaten its established structure, including the cracks and gaps that it might cause in it. Thus, language becomes a field of confrontation and a space for conflict. Femininity leaks through its vacuums and pumps its contents in its possible channels in order to purify them from the patriarchal system that dwells in it. This action that aims to rebuild the language and awareness in a different way, bears with it a promise of femininity<sup>[38]</sup>.

## FEMINISTIC THEORIES AND THE CONCEPT OF GENDER

The concept of 'gender' constituted the cornerstone of the contemporary feminist theory, and therefore, the female thinkers of the feminist movement adopted it in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and sought to distinguish between it and the concept of 'sex'. Psychologist Robert Stoller coined the concept of 'gender' in order to distinguish the social and psychological meanings of 'femininity' and 'masculinity' from the biological foundations of the sexual differences that are born within individuals.[39]

The *first feminist wave* of the Western feminist movement started with demanding that the general rights that the man enjoys should be given to women, too, and continued emphasizing equality between the two sexes. It also considered the sex differences of the woman to be marginal and do not make her inferior to the man and do not prevent her from receiving an education and practicing her job and political life and managing her financial matters like the man. The first wave tried to approach the prevailing male model as a civilized model for men. The thinkers and philosophers of this generation, Mary Wollstonecraft, John Stewart Mill, and Harriet Taylor were largely influenced by the thoughts of Angles and Marx. As a result, they sought to criticize the patriarchal system and describe it as a suppressive social system that is based on the superiority of the male sex. The influence of this wave expanded to the East by men and women pioneers and leaders of the Arab Renaissance such as Rifa'a al-Tahtawi, Qassem Amin, Nazira Zein al-Din, and Hoda Sha'rawi.

Their work was focused on formulating an Islamic concept of Arab woman's liberation.

The first wave of the feminist movement in Western thought was a social and political movement. By 1920, the woman had already achieved a lot of her rights and goals. Feminism after that entered a relative stagnation because the world was busy at that time with the signs of the Second World War and its consequences, while the Third World countries were facing the imperialist countries through their national liberation movements.

The *second feminist wave* took place in America in the 1960s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and remained connected to its social and political origins. In that American period of liberalism, which called for equal rights, intensified after it succeeded in downsizing racial discrimination and the rising voices against the Vietnam War and the breakout of the demonstrations of the students' movement against high-heels and chest corsets, and the revolution against beauty contests and everything that restricts the woman to her femininity only. The concept of 'gender' appeared in the second wave of the works of male and female theorists of the feminist movement through their analysis of the social relationships, and their search for the causes of the male domination of females. Those feminist women believed that 'sex' is a fixed biological nature in the hereditary environment. However, gender is not a biological nature but a result of a social process that defines the roles and features in different ways that are connected to culture. In this period, the philosophers of feminist movements criticized unjust legal acts and regulations against women.

The employment of the concept of 'gender' led to the emergence of two types of theorization: the *first theory* maintains that there is a fixed entity for each category, by the effect of biological factors on human nature. This approach is represented by Mary Daly, Susan Griffin and Marline Fray. The *second theory* refuses the existence of a fixed entity and emphasizes the impact of the social factors on human beings and is represented by: Juliet Mitchell, Sandra Bartky, Betty Frieden, Kate Millett, and others.

Each approach is exaggerated in its evaluation of the influence of one factor on the behavior of the individual. The *first* approach called for the belief of a biological inevitability, which led to exaggeration in magnifying the female traits and the evaluation of the importance of the woman's body to the extent of abridging the woman into the limits of her body and abridging the body into the borders of the sexual dimension. The supporters of the *second approach* exaggerated their evaluation of the social factor and their interpretation of the natural, psychological,

physiological, and biological differences between the two sexes according to the social and political differences.

The *second feminist wave* was influenced and inspired by the thoughts of the French existentialist philosopher Simone de Beauvoir in her book *The Other Sex* (1949), which was the mainstream for them, and the window through which looked the female thinkers of this stage. They tried to imagine a society that is empty of discrimination and suppression and accused the male philosophers of employing the principle of 'rationalism' to exclude women from the fields of knowledge, ignoring seeing female thinkers such as Mary Wollstonecraft. Simon emphasized in her book that the woman is not born a woman, but she becomes a woman, and she is socialized by society which formulates the position of the female.[40]

Simon de Beauvoir is considered the mother of modern feminist philosophies. She was called the Second American Wave in Neo-feminism because she acquired intellectual maturity. The difference between the first feminist wave and the second feminist wave lies in the fact that the first wave is considered one of the manifestations of modernist enlightenment, which was also the ideology of imperialism in its rational ideals that embody masculinity, which worked on the obliteration of the woman's particularities and approximating her to the masculine model in order to get some of the human rights that were a monopoly for the man only.

The *second wave*, however, namely, the New Feminism, which is post-modern feminism, is characterized most by its criticism of the male rational model of the human being and refusal of his being the only one in the arena as a center of Western civilization. After the *second wave* of the Western feminist movement achieved some of its demands, people started using the concept of 'gender'. People started talking about the two sexes instead of talking about the woman and her rights. In this stage, the statement of 'gender' played an important role ie feminist analysis and criticism.

After that, the *third wave* of the feminist movement appeared, and it was distinguished by its influence by the philosophers of the Post-Feminism movements, such as Foucault and Derrida, whose criticism constituted the concept of rationalism and centrality of the mind, and their single definition of the 'truth', the link between the feminist thought and Post-Modernism thought.

Foucault's ideas motivated the female thinkers to introduce the feminist doctrine as a confrontation science that challenges the confinement of humanity in the male and the gender definition of masculinity. Some female thinkers found in Derrida's ideas bear a feministic thought and



subjects that are related to women suitable elements for the structure of the feminist theory.

Post-Feminism is considered the newest link in the features of feminist thought, which is characterized by transformation, and constant change. This movement moves according to the theoretic approach of the second feministic wave in studying the fruitful relations about the Post-Modernism stage, aiming to combine different ways of coining, and formulating the personality and the role of the woman in any society. Naomi Wolf and Judith Butler are considered among the prominent feminists in the Post-Modern movement.<sup>[41]</sup>

### THE LIBERAL FEMINISM THEORY

The Liberal Feminism Theory appeared at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in Western Europe, during the French Revolution and the American Revolution against Feudalism, and during the Age of Enlightenment caused a series of social changes in all fields of life, which led to the breakup of the traditional frames and the demands for the main traditional liberal principles, which include: individualism, rationalism, values of freedom, equality, and justice, namely, the right of private ownership. However, this demand for liberal individual rights excluded women from it, till the appearance of Jon Stewart Mel and his wife Harriet Taylor, and Mary Wollstonecraft, who demanded equal rights between men and women.<sup>[42]</sup>

John Stewart Mel and his wife Harriet Taylor defended women's rationalism, believing that rationalism means "the ability to support an independent decision of self-assertion". Both of them called for the achievement of a just society that introduces equal education for both sexes, economic opportunities, and equal civil freedom, starting from the principle that there is no difference in mental abilities between the man and the woman.<sup>[43]</sup>

Liberal Feminism started by calling for equal opportunities between the two sexes in the various social institutes of education and economics. Those calls focused on three main principles to achieve that: freedom of choice, individualism, and equal opportunities. Therefore, the Liberal Theory is also called Egalitarian Feminism, which is considered one of the most moderate theories within the feminist theories. Its main presumption is that all people, males, and females, are equal, and it is unnecessary to deprive some people of equal opportunities in all fields because of their gender. Liberal Feminism maintains that men and women have the same ability because of its influence on the doctrine of enlightenment that is based on rationalism. It is also considered one of the important and main means of changing and driving society towards equality. Liberal Feminism believes that the State should

interfere in social life in order to protect the woman from non-liberal practices and protect her from discrimination and suppression for many years, and to achieve balance with the man in society. From its point of view, discrimination includes policies of the woman's preference to the man in jobs, and the system of 'quota' in public positions on the condition that these practices should be temporary till actual equality is achieved, and not just legal equality, which the Liberal Feminism called 'Affirmative Actions'.<sup>[44]</sup>

The goal of Liberal Feminism from a theoretical and practical point of view is to move women from unvalued work inside the house to the world of valuable business that is considered a monopoly for men.

Betty Friedan [45] and others dream about the sovereignty of a world in which the woman can do any valuable job that she desires in the public space. Liberal Feminism was exposed to criticism because it was concerned with social ethics that are derived from the life of the man, ignoring a different type that is derived from the life of the woman and her way of interaction with the world. In fact, she did that because she believed that 'ethics' that are derived from a male authority decrease the values that are traditionally connected to the woman's life and her social roles. Liberal Feminism does not realize that the woman, as a result of her life and ethical experiences, is able to introduce ethical values and concepts that give social life a different character from the prevailing one. The insistence of Liberal Feminism on the necessity of the woman's entrance to the public space and man's space constitutes a confession by her about the inferiority of activities on the individual level<sup>[46]</sup>.

### THE MARXIST FEMINIST THEORY

The Marxist Feminist Theory and Marx's writings contributed to the studies about women and their status. The feminist male and female theorists employed Marx's concepts in talking about woman's oppression and other related issues such as alienation, economic oppression, use of value, reserve labor, and dialectic.<sup>[47]</sup>

The conception of this theory focuses on the idea that human nature has a biological foundation, and it lies in man's ability to practice and exploit nature consciously in a way that serves his goals, and this is what characterizes man from animals. What characterizes feminist Marxism most from other feminist theories is that it considers class oppression as the basic oppression of the two sexes. Class oppression in the shadow of the capitalistic economic system puts the woman at low places and slight salaries and considers her a reserve labor power that can be used when necessary or in low-salary jobs. In other words, this

system includes 'gender segregation at the workplace on the one hand, and inside the house, on the other, knowing that women introduce free services for the capitalists, by providing care and rest for their husbands who work in this system. Besides, the existence of women at home makes them consumers of capitalist products. Thus, they raise their economic oppression, which increases their oppression in all fields of life.

Class division is the key to the suppression of women. In spite of the education and health care that the political regime in the developed capitalistic countries secured for women, the existing system has remained dependent on them the work that the woman performs without paid salaries to produce a sound workforce in mind and body. Hence, Marxist feminism that deals with the development of the gendered character calls for the necessity to start changing the actual living circumstances of women and men before changing the categories of gender education. This is an issue that is achieved through reproducing the social relations that are based on class relations in a society that is characterized by good class and gender relations. [48] Therefore, Marxist feminism believes that woman's suppression results from social classes rather than relations between the two sexes.

As a result of the abovementioned, Angles demanded that economic oppression should be ended because it will lead to the end of the patriarchal system that oppresses the woman exactly as the capitalists oppress the proletariat class. Marxist feminism maintained that women are prepared to adopt the roles that society demands. That can be achieved when they adjust to the traditional husband and are separated from males completely, while males continue to be raised in a different way. Men and women, consequently, create the society that formulates them in a dialectic way. Therefore, Marxist feminism calls for the necessity of looking at the nature of the work that women perform, and their social relationship that formulates their thoughts and defines their awareness in order to understand and discover the oppression that befalls them. Women in the capitalist system do not constitute a 'class' that is parallel with men's class. The conflict that takes place with them is a class conflict; it is a conflict that results from the women's awareness of their rights because of the development of their expertise, regarding the unpaid tedious jobs such as home chores, conjugal duties, and childbearing. The women help in keeping the wheels of the capitalistic machine working through the food, clothes, covers, and emotions and meeting their needs. Therefore, the capitalistic feminism that the woman, even if she works in the shadow of the capitalistic system, also helps in its continuity, because of the slight opportunities that are given to her.<sup>[49]</sup>

As a result of all that has been said, Marxist feminism employed the concept of 'alienation' for the woman to use to express the woman's alienation towards her product. She is like a machine that gives children and serves the husband. The feeling of the woman's alienation will not disappear unless she feels able to assert herself through performing valuable deeds that are beneficial to society as a whole.

### THE RADICAL FEMINISM THEORY

The Radical Feminism Theory appeared at the end of 1969 and the beginning of 1970 when a group of women started demanding their civil rights and another group started an anti-war movement. These groups realized the degree of oppression that they are exposed to and the treatment that they received from their male partners in those movements, and the bad treatment that women, in general, received from certain attitudes. For example, women were not allowed to occupy any leadership positions in the *anti-slavery movement* even in their participation in it. All that has been said made them realize the degree of gender oppression that they suffered from by men and realize the necessity to move and struggle against it and demand their rights.[50]

Radical Feminism was influenced first by the liberal individual principle that emphasizes that man has the freedom to choose the gender role that he wants. This principle refuses the idea that society constitutes the individual because the individual can withdraw from society or refuse the imposed identity on him and choose by himself the gender identity and the gender roles that suit him. Radical Feminism agreed that women's problems are all connected to their sex, and it attributes the existence of discrimination to the existence of patriarchal societies and their institutes that represent this discrimination in an institutionalized way. Radical Feminism sees that society consists of parts that are connected and interconnected among themselves. Each part depends on the other, and, therefore, it is impossible to attack the discrimination that exists in the patriarchal society completely. Here, Radical Feminism disagrees with Liberal Feminism that requests to work from within the existing system, as the woman's oppression, for Radical Feminism, is attributed to the man's pervasive control in all the institutes of the patriarchal society. This situation will not change as long as this control remains institutionalized way. Therefore, Radical Feminism sees that women should establish institutions that deal with their own problems and a united women's society that is disconnected from men's society. Radical Feminism sees that they have to stop all their relationships with men, including the natural sexual

relationship that is prevalent in all societies of the world. Only after that will women become dependent on one another, and not on the male sex.<sup>[51]</sup>

Some theorists of Radical Feminism, such as Mary Daly, refused the division of humanity by the patriarchal society into two poles: one pole that represents the "I" / Man and another pole that represents the "Other", namely, the Woman. She saw that the only way to get rid of that division lies in the destruction of this gender separation that is based on 'sex'. Daly believes that the male sovereignty over the female and his suppression of her is attributed to the patriarchal system that formulated the characteristics and features of femininity and the characteristics and features of masculinity.<sup>[52]</sup>

As a result of that, Daly encourages all women to refuse all the traits of femininity such as 'weakness', and to attach to the traits of 'power' that men claim to have. Destruction of the patriarchal system that is pervasive in all sets of the social system, from her point of view, is the only way to liberate the woman.<sup>[53]</sup>

Among the prominent feminist women in Radical Feminism is Kate Millett, in her book *Sexual Politics*, and Shulamith Firestone in her book *The Dialectic of Sex*. Both writers focused on the patriarchal system being the law of the Father. Shulamith Firestone saw that that "law" imposes male sovereignty in all institutes as well as in all the other cultural types. According to this "law", the male occupies all positions of power in societies, where the patriarchal system prevails in the fields of economics, technology, sciences, government, and home. Despite the change that took place in all societies, including woman's entrance into these fields, the index of gender is still varied to a large extent.<sup>[54]</sup>

### THE SOCIALIST FEMINISM THEORY

The Socialist Feminist Theory emerged from Marxists Feminism, Radical Feminism, and Psychoanalysis, in which Juliet Mitchell tried to integrate these fundamental thoughts of the feminist doctrine under the umbrella of one concept- "sex". Hence, she considered the woman's suppression to be something rooted in her life in the shadow of her patriarchal society. She called for the necessity of changing the woman's position and her role in the public and private fields in order to achieve her full freedom.<sup>[55]</sup>

This theory argues that 'discrimination' on the basis of sex (Sexism) serves the capitalist system (Capitalism) because the woman's work within her home is unpaid and serves Capitalism. Besides, in the Reserve Labor Force, the women are reserved in the shadow of the capitalist system till it is needed. Besides, the working woman in the

shadow of this system gains low salaries, which increases the system's profits at the expense of the working class, especially the women who work by payment or without payment. The job of the woman who works at home is childbearing, childraising, and home economics. By that, she benefits the work labor force and benefits her husband in the shadow of the exploiting capitalist system, which keeps her dependent largely on the man and makes her represent the negativity because she supports her husband, who finances his family economically, and consequently, preserves the continuity of the capitalistic system. The woman's dependence and her negativity allow the man to keep his authority over her completely. Unlike Liberal Feminism, this theory maintains that the woman's salvation from this condition and the non-liberation of the exploiters by the capitalist system led to the existence of discrimination on grounds of sex. This change will not take place except by a socialist revolution as Marx and Engels planned it. It is a revolution that leads to the destruction of private ownership that is based on exploitation, and the reorganization of the economy on collective principles that benefit all people equally. However, in order to be achieved, this change has to include the economy, and work at home as it is a change that does not seek to destroy the family, but to substitute the jobs that were done by the family, and which were done only by the woman.<sup>[56]</sup>

Socialist Feminism was concerned with the women's jobs in the private domain, but it gave priority to the women's work in the public domain, too. It also objected to the low salaries that women receive in this field in comparison with men's salaries. It also objected to the kind of jobs that are given to women, which are often with children and patients, which leads to the non-development of her skills for distinguished positions.<sup>[57]</sup>

While Marxist Feminism was focusing on the 'class' as a basis for the inferiority of the woman's status, Socialist Feminism focused on the interconnected relationships between the capitalist class system, and submission that is based on gender or gender inferiority. Therefore, the aim of Socialist Feminism was the integration of the most important visions that exist in Marxist Feminism and Radical Feminism. It seems that both systems, the Patriarchal and the Capitalist were the reason for the inferiority of the woman's status in comparison with the man's status.<sup>[58]</sup> Among the most pioneering and leading socialist feminist writers are: Zillah Eisenstein, who wrote the book: *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism*.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Several definitions have been introduced for the concept of 'gender' since its widespread in the middle of the nineties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The concept of 'gender' has developed from a linguistic term/ concept to become a theory and an ideology of a well-defined feminist movement in most civilized societies called "Feminism". The concept of 'gender' has often been used as a sociological saying in the first place, as if language was of secondary importance only.

The concept of 'gender' is employed as a linguistic term for the classification of names, pronouns, and adjectives, or a verb that is based on characteristics that are related to sex in some languages and in mere linguistic units. The concept of 'gender' was introduced by social studies in general and sociology, in particular through the study of the social and political reality in an attempt to analyze the roles and responsibilities, and obstacles of every man and woman. Besides, the concept of 'gender' involves some radical attitudes that sometimes deal with the relationship between man and woman as a zero-relationship that sometimes calls for, among other things, the establishment of a society of 'women' on the pretext that it is the only society that achieves absolute equality between its individuals.

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- [45]Betty Frieden, leader of Liberal Feminism in the frame of the second wave of the feminist movement, declared that the gender role is an acquired one, and is strongly connected to the manner in which boys and girls are dealt with since their birth. The gender role that is given to the females controls their minds and limits their roles and thoughts to traditional jobs as wives and mothers. This is a result of their deprivation from higher education that qualifies them to get better opportunities because this combination increased the woman's burden, especially the ideal one. Hence, Frieden was encouraging women to combine their work with their marriage and motherhood. However, Betty Frieden withdrew from the idea of full equality between the two sexes, maintaining that the sexual differences between the two sexes hinder the achievement of full equality between them. Therefore, Betty Frieden called for the two sexes to develop common features between them, namely, finding the androgenic character that combines the traits of males and traits of females and exchanging roles between themselves. That can be achieved through the process of socialization. Betty's point of view was welcomed by the contemporary liberal women who emphasized the necessity of calling for the development of the qualities of the androgenic character on grounds that the gender roles of the two sexes are acquired socially and built culturally. See, for example, Al-Azizi, and Khadija (2005). *Al-Usus al-Falsafiya li al-Fikr al-Nasawi al-Gharbi*. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. Beirut: Bisan li al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi', 111; Bryson, Valerie, *Feminist Political Theory*. London: Macmillan Press LTD, 1992, 87.
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